

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

news release

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EARLY HUNTING SEASONS FOR MIGRATORY BIRDS SET

Final regulations setting the hunting frameworks for certain migratory birds were published in the Federal Register on July 28. They became effective on that date.

This was the sixth rulemaking notice dealing with the 1976-77 migratory bird hunting season issued by the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. It sets forth the species to be hunted, the daily bag and possession limits, the shooting hours, the season lengths, the earliest opening and latest closing season dates, and special closures, from which State conservation agency officials may select open season dates.

It also reflects changes made to protect endangered species of birds.

Upon receipt of season selections from State officials, the Service, in mid-August, will publish in the Federal Register a final rulemaking amending certain sections of the Federal regulations to reflect seasons, limits and shooting hours for the contiguous United States, Alaska, and Hawaii for the 1976-77 season.

Species to be hunted are mourning doves, white-winged doves, band-tailed pigeons, rails, woodcock, snipe, and gallinules; teal in the Mississippi and Central Flyways during September; sea ducks in certain defined areas of the Atlantic Flyway; and waterfowl, coots, snipe, and cranes in Alaska.

Shooting hours except where noted are allowed from one half-hour before sunrise until sunset.

Seasons for mourning doves may be selected between September 1, 1976, and January 15, 1977.

White-winged dove seasons may be selected in Arizona, California, Nevada, New Mexico, and Texas between September 1 and December 31, 1976.

Band-tailed pigeon seasons of not more than 30 consecutive days may be selected in California, Oregon, and Washington between September 1, 1976, and January 15, 1977. Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah may select seasons not to exceed 30 consecutive days between September 1 and November 30, 1976.

Seasons totaling no more than 70 days may be selected for clapper and king rails between September 1, 1976, and January 20, 1977, in Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Jersey, Delaware, and Maryland, and in Texas, Louisiana,

(over)

Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia. The season will remain closed on clapper and king rails in all other States.

Seasons totaling no more than 70 days may be selected for sora and Virginia rails between September 1, 1976 and January 20, 1977, in States of the Atlantic, Mississippi, and Central Flyways.

Woodcock seasons may be selected in States in the Atlantic, Mississippi, and Central Flyways between September 1, 1976, and February 28, 1977, for not more than 65 days. In the States of Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia the season must end by January 31, 1977.

Seasons of not more than 107 days for common (Wilson's) snipe may be selected in States in the Atlantic, Mississippi, and Central Flyways between September 1, 1976, and February 28, 1977. In the States of Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia the season must end no later than January 31, 1977. Seasons not to exceed 93 days may be selected in the Pacific Flyway portions of Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, and New Mexico between September 1, 1976, and February 28, 1977.

Gallinules seasons may be selected in States in the Atlantic, Mississippi, and Central Flyways between September 1, 1976, and January 20, 1977, for not more than 70 days.

Scoter, eider, and oldsquaw ducks seasons may be selected in coastal areas of the Atlantic Flyway from Maine to Georgia for a maximum open season of 107 days between September 18, 1976, and January 20, 1977.

A September teal season may be held for no more than 9 days between September 1 and September 30, 1976, on all species of teal by the States of Alabama, Arkansas, Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, New Mexico, Ohio, Oklahoma, Tennessee, and Texas in areas delineated by State regulations. Shooting hours are from sunrise to sunset daily.

Migratory game bird seasons in Alaska may be selected between September 1, 1976, and January 26, 1977, for waterfowl, coots, snipe, and cranes.

As in the past, hunting regulations this year are designed to remove or alleviate chances of conflict between seasons for migratory game birds and the protection of endangered species. These include closures of designated areas in Alaska and the Aleutian Islands to the taking of Canada geese, for the protection of the Aleutian Canada goose (Branta canadensis leucopareia); closures in Puerto Rico for protection of the Plains pigeon (Columba inornata wetmorei) and Puerto Rican parrot (Amazona vittata); protection of all species of rails in the Pacific Flyway, for the protection of the California, light-footed, and Yuma clapper rails (Rallus longirostris spp.); and the setting of limited lesser sandhill crane seasons in the Central Flyway so as to alleviate risks to the whooping crane (Grus americana).